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Review of A Guide to the Nests, Eggs, and Nestlings of North American Birds

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A Guide to the Nests, Eggs, and Nestlings of North American Birds.—Paul J. Baicich and Colin J. O. Harrison. 1997. Academic Press, San Diego, California. 347 pp., 64 color plates, 103 text figures. ISBN 0-12072831-1. Paper, \$24.95.—In 1978, during a visit to England, I purchased a copy of the first edition of this book, then called a field guide. It was written by Colin Harrison, published by Collins, and produced in standard field guide size. It never was effectively distributed in North America, which was unfortunate, because it was far better than the guide to bird nests by Hal Harrison in the well-known Peterson field guide series. Not only did it illustrate the eggs of about 550 species, in color and life size, but it also offered nestling paintings of nearly 150 species, plus numerous line drawings of nests and young. Just as importantly, it offered concise information on breeding seasons, incubation periods, nestling appearances, and nestling periods; altogether it provided a sort of condensed and updated version of Bent's life histories. I have used this book a great deal and found it invaluable as an introductory reference, as opposed to searching for primary data sources.

Now we are offered a new version of this guide, in a larger format (6 × 9 inches), with the same number of color plates (but eggs of 597 species illustrated) and an additional 43 splendid line sketches by Terry O'Nele. The taxonomy has been brought nearly up to date (exclusive of 1997 AOU changes), and much new information on nesting biology is provided. It is

therefore even more useful than the original version. Although no in-text citations are provided, a list of 100 book or monograph references judged by the authors to be the most important sources of nesting information is provided.

In addition to the information summarized on the nesting biology of North American birds, the book provides an easy way of judging what remains to be learned. Besides about a dozen species for which little information is yet available on the nestling phase of breeding, some two dozen species are still essentially unstudied as to nesting biology. These include the Black Storm-Petrel (*Oceanodroma melania*), Hook-billed Kite (*Chondrohierax uncinatus*), Eskimo Curlew (*Numenius borealis*), Buff-collared Nightjar (*Caprimulgus ridgwayi*), Berylline Hummingbird (*Amazilia beryllina*), Violet-crowned Hummingbird (*A. violiceps*), Eared Trogon (*Euptilotis neoxenus*), Northern Beardless Tyrannulet (*Camptostoma imberbe*), Greater Pewee (*Contopus pertinax*), Couch's Kingbird (*Tyrannus couchii*), Thick-billed Kingbird (*T. crassirostris*), Black-capped Gnatcatcher (*Poliophtila nigriceps*), Black-whiskered Vireo (*Vireo altiloquus*), Bachman's Warbler (*Vermivora bachmani*), Lucy's Warbler (*V. lucia*), Tropical Parula (*Parula pitiayami*), Black-throated Gray Warbler (*Dendroica nigrescens*), Grace's Warbler (*D. graciae*), Hepatic Tanager (*Piranga flava*), Olive Sparrow (*Arremonops rufivirgatus*), and McKay's Bunting (*Plectrophenax hyperboreus*). Clearly, the American Southwest remains a fertile area for graduate students who may casting about for field projects.

All told, this book will be of great usefulness to field ornithologists, and, if larger than most field guides, it nonetheless is well worth hauling along in a knapsack or glove compartment. It also belongs in personal and institutional libraries, especially those lacking the earlier edition.—PAUL A. JOHNSGARD, *School of Biological Sciences, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebraska 68588, USA.*